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Mathematics Education

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Mathematics Education

By: Kyla Berman

Many people struggle with math. In America, 50% of all college students don't pass algebra with a C or higher. (Saxe and Braddy, 2015) This is a problem because math is necessary for all STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) professions and these are well-paid jobs.

All over the world, you will hear people say “I am just not a math person.” When you tell yourself that you are not good at math or not a math person you can actually hurt your future. There may be some small genetic component to math skills, but studies show that hard work, preparation, and self-confidence outweigh genetics (Kimball and Smith, 2013). All over the world people come into math classes with different backgrounds and levels of preparation. ON the first few tests, the well-prepared students get good grades and the unprepared students struggle. The unprepared students usually assume that their poor grades are because they are ‘just not a math person’ or not good at math and they may give up, or not try as hard, making them fall farther behind in future classes. The well-prepared students may decide that they are math people. This type of thinking results in them having more confidence and working harder in the future. This scenario can happen whether you consciously think about it, or just decide that you are not that good in math. Tests were done that sowed that people who say that their math ability can’t change becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Groth, 2011). “Convincing students that they could make themselves smarter by hard work

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led them to work harder and get higher grades" (Kimball and Smith, 2013). If you have a growth mindset, work hard, and believe you can get better at math, you will.

Locally, there are math education problems too. Foster care kids are not getting the math help they need. Data from foster kids in 2015/2016 showed that only 13% met or exceeded the math standard from our public schools. There are approximately 330 foster kids in Humboldt County (Houston, 2017). That means about 300 of those kids did not meet the math standard. In comparison, about 39% of non-foster kids met or exceeded the standards (Houston, 2017), which represents a 24% difference.

The United States is falling behind in mathematics. This affects people's career opportunities and our country's ability to contribute to STEM fields globally. Locally, not everyone is getting a good math education either. These issues needs to be addressed locally, nationally, and globally which takes a united effort between parents, teachers, and schools. By helping students have a growth mindset and supplying them with additional help if they need it students can have bright futures.

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